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581
586 "A playful woman had married three or four men but had left them all. She was at a drinking ceremony and danced all night with a chief who was tall and liked to dance, but he was old. She could not see that at night. In the morning he put her on the horse with him to go home. She said, "Where do you live?' 'At the place of the Dead Dog.' 'Oh, that's too far.' So she jumped off the horse and left him. She had seen by the rising sun that he was old." (26)

"The chief of our village is so old that he is blind and deaf. He has lived all his life with one wife. They never quarrel. That is true of many of our people." (26)

THE BERDACHE

838 The male transvestite was a common figure. It is comprehensible that a man who balked at the rigors of war and hunting should accept woman's clothing as an alternative entirely without opprobrium. But the berdache was said to have been discovered in early childhood. If the parents found that a boy liked female pursuits they tested him. The regular pattern, mentioned by many informants, was to build a small enclosure and place in it bow and arrows and basketry materials. Thechild was told to go in and play and then the parents set fire to the enclosure. They watched what he took with him as he ran out and if it was the basketry materials, they reconciled themselves to his being a berdache.

The berdache performed women's work. He made one of the group of women on food gathering expeditions and was treated as one of themselves. He was often a clever potter and basket maker and an asset on food gathering expeditions, because he "didn't get tired as we did". He also played an important role in the village.

[727] When the Apache trophy was hung up, if there was a berdache in the village, he might dance around it with a bow taunting it: "See what you are reduced to! The men will not look at you, but I, even I, can shoot you" (27).

● [588] The berdache might marry, but often, since he was entirely able to work and support himself, he lived alone and was visited by the men. To each visitor he gave an obscene nickname and the men were very proud of these, since they were often bolder than those bestowed by women. No scorn was felt for the berdache. He was respected and liked by the women and his sex life with the men was a community institution.

One informant thus described her berdache brother-in-law:

"We girls used to spend all day with that man-woman, Shining Evening. She went off with us to gather plants and she could carry more than any of us and dig longer. She ground corn with us, all

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taking turns at my mother-in-law's grinding slab. Our husbands used to tease us girls. 'How do we know these children running around the house belong to us? We are away in the mountains all the time and in the fields. It is Shining Evening who is with the women.' Then they would laugh and say to the babies, 'Run along. Over there is your daddy.....'. 838

When we learned from the Whites to make skirts with drawstrings, Shining Evening was the first to have one. A man pulled the string and said, 'What's that?' and she said squealing, 'Skirt string!' So after that the man was always called skirt string."

"There was a berdache in the next village and that one had a husband. She came with him to the drinking ceremony and I saw her cooking for him on the fireplace of some of her relatives. They seemed happy." (26) [568]

When informants were asked about female transvestites, they burst into laughter at the possibility.